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The Vandals of Hollywood

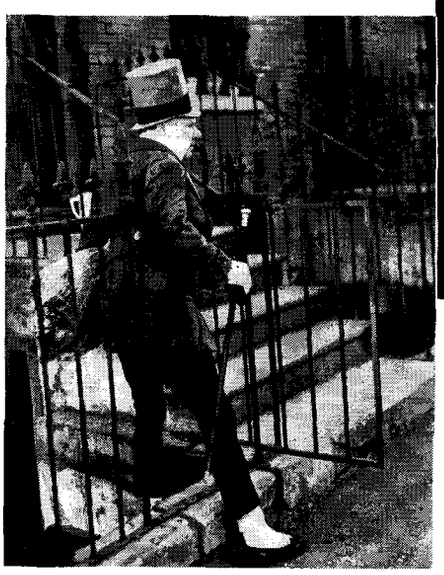
Why "a Good Movie Cannot Be Faithful to the Original Book or Play"

BY GILBERT SELDES

THERE can't be any question that during the past few months movies have made a great gain in prestige. On this gain they propose to capitalize still further, using the same methods and materials. As these materials are chiefly novels and plays, the treatment of "works of art" in the movies can now be considered without the indignation which used to be deemed necessary. It is perfectly clear that the movies are doing better and better by their originals and at the same time the originals are themselves worthier and weightier. Certainly the most impressive single movie of the moment is "Romeo and Juliet," the most distinguished translation to the screen of a work of the highest significance. A pamphlet issued by the Hays organization lists those films which are expected to be important in the coming months; the great majority of them are very respectable novels and plays. The producers are importing authorities in literature, heraldry, costume, history, architecture, and naval construction. Without a doubt when they come to film "a seacoast in Bohemia" it will be geographically correct.

Now that this is assured, all that is left for us to worry about is whether we shall still have good movies.

The special reason for doubts on this subject is that after years of manhandling whatever originals they chose, producers have at last made a movie version of a "classic" reverently, devotedly; as the original was "The Green Pastures," you might say sacramentally. Purely as a moving picture, "The Green Pastures" was almost completely negligible. It is a conspicuous proof that the vandals of Hollywood knew what they were about when, left to themselves, they slashed and cut and pasted together and made good movies out of whatever work they bought or appropriated. These good movies did not carry the message of the original ("An American Tragedy") or the atmosphere and tone (Schnitzler's "Anatol"); or they distorted the characters (Bligh in "Mutiny on the Bounty" ordered the fiendish lashing of the dead men to continue; in the original, he was only an observer of another man's viciousness); or twisted the point (Molnar's "The Devil"); or provided happy endings to tragedies (by the dozen). But for the most part, the movies made out of novels and plays were as good movies as Hollywood could produce at the time, whereas "The Green Pastures," because the original was held sacred, isn't even as good as an exact duplication of the stage-play would have been. It serves as an energetic reminder of a good principle; that when we go to the movies, we should ask for good movies, even if they are corrupt versions of good books.



W. C. FIELDS AS MR. MICAWBER
The old way and the new—two weeks reading, two hours seeing

"ROMEO AND JULIET"
Super-spectacle with old-fashioned close-up.

Why do they have to be corrupt? Except in the rarest instances ("Treasure Island" is one) a good movie cannot be faithful to the original book or play and, conversely, a faithful version cannot be a good movie. The original intention can be preserved; in some instances, the original atmosphere can be retained, as it was in "Reunion in Vienna" and "Little Man, What Now?" But a good moving picture cannot be a good reproduction of its original in fiction or drama because the essence of the movie, in spite of the use of dialogue, is movement; and the essential element in the originals is the word, to which the theatre adds action, which is something different from movement.

To say that the essence of the movie is movement seems obvious enough; but it has to be said over and over again because nine-tenths of those concerned in making the movies do not know it, except perhaps instinctively or, if they do know it, do not understand how this one principle dominates the pictures, touching upon every minute detail. I do not wish to write here an essay on the esthetics of the film, or on the nature of its psychological effects, but I think that two very brief illustrations can suggest the approach I am making. Dr. Allardyce Nicoll, in his excellent book "Film and Theatre," seems to disagree with the principle that action in the theatre is different from movement on the screen; he considers movement the "basic element" in both and yet immediately afterward he says: "drama demands words." The proved thing is that the movies do not; they *demand* nothing but movement. Born lucky, the movies have received many gifts including words and color; and movement, so to speak, is their own immovable element. We are not always aware of the constant movement on the screen, but directors and actors see to it

Next Week

WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA: 1936-1937
Reviewed by H. L. Mencken

THE LIVES OF TALLEYRAND
By CRANE BRINTON
Reviewed by Elmer Davis

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that no scene runs more than a few seconds without movement of some sort even if the movement has no significance. Moreover, the grand movement of any film, the contrast in the rhythm of movement between one section and another, the rushes and retardations, as they approach and depart from the climax, are all essentially matters of movement. This esthetic point is also an essential psychological point. "It is surely clear," says Barbara Low, the Engish psychoanalyst, "that . . . cinema entertainment must gratify the magic 'omnipotence wish' more than any fairy tale, in novel, picture, or drama can possibly do — and does so independently, to a large extent, of the theme of the film. It is this *method* which brings about so vividly the sense of wish fulfilment." The movement in pictures corresponds, let us say, to the melody of a song. The actual words are of secondary importance. (What we all remember of a film is, in nine cases out of ten, a movement and an action, sometimes supported by sound; rarely is it the spoken word or the theme. We do remember the plot, as it is expressed in action.)

"RUGGLES OF RED GAP"
Adaptation to the star, not the screen.

It is because this fundamental thing is not known that people make mistakes about movies. I find, for instance, a hopeful statement from Dr. Robert MacDonald, addressed to twenty-five delegates to the American Congress of Poets. When the screen evolves out of the "necker stage," American poets will write movie scenarios, according to the report in the *New York Post*. "Were the screen poetic," Dr. MacDonald goes on, "it would teach . . . young people the real nobility and sweetness and beauty of love." A pious aspiration, but it misses the essence of the movies. Scenarios written by poets, professional technical poets using the language of poetry, would not make poetic movies, would not even make tolerably good movies. By the movement on the screen the movies create images, and properly used these images are the counterpart of poetry, so that when poetry comes to the screen it will have to be created in terms of motion, not of words. Dr. MacDonald is only doing for his special interest what others have done before, that is, trying to make the movies into something else. The attempt to make the movies into illustrated versions of books and particularly into photographs of plays nearly wrecked the flowering art of the movies in the silent days; others have tried to assimilate the movies to the dance; and others to music. That they are essentially a separate form, and must be allowed to develop independently, borrowing what they can use, rejecting everything else, is the one thing critics seem unwilling to allow to the art, or business, which they generally despise.

When they borrow, they have to transmute. Take the poetry, to me an overblown and second-rate poetry, of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." It comes to us primarily as sounds. These sounds are words we understand and they create images for us. Once in a generation you may see a Puck or an Oberon or a Titania embodied in a player who does not shatter the image — perhaps by a miracle enhances it. The movie version, being a picture, had to create visual images and as the long recitations would not be heard by audiences accustomed to the brief speech of gangster plays and hard comedies, the movement of an army of extras, glistening in rare fabrics, had to be managed while the essential speeches went on. Max Reinhardt has never been so much poetic as fanciful, so his style was appropriate to this particular play; but his best talent came out in the low-comedy scenes where he paid tribute to Shakespeare and to Hollywood at the same time, by persuading us that the buffoons of one were the buffoons of the other.

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"
The low-comedy scenes pay tribute to Shakespeare and Hollywood at once.

I am a little perverse about the Bard, but shall not always remain so. When "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "King Lear," and "Antony and Cleopatra" are placed on the screen, I will be ready to judge of the movies' capacity to deal with a great work of art; "Romeo and Juliet," however, has always seemed to me Shakespeare's own second best. So again I do not think that the movies had an exceptionally difficult task in the production. Always fond of a spectacle and fonder of a super-spectacle, the movies found the opportunity for display irresistible in the opening scenes, but this was thoroughly justified because the whole action has to move against a background of splendor. They came then to the poetry of love and Mr. George Cukor, usually a director of excellent instincts, made the prime error of reverting to the old fashioned close-up, posing Miss Shearer's face, rather than her person, against a fragment of a rococo column during most of this scene. It is a scene in which significant movement, in counterpoint to the poetry, would be hard to invent; the alternative I suspect would have been to give us the splendor of the night with Romeo and Juliet in the far distance, barely visible figures overshadowed by the night and magnificence of their own passions. Once that scene was over, the movies proceeded to their true business — the creation of an exciting crisis expressed almost entirely in movement, so that Shakespeare's melodrama of misunderstanding and murder comes off superbly.

Light on the entire problem of the adaptation of classics to the movies comes from the most unexpected source; from the studios of Walt Disney. Less than a year ago I was able to write, accurately and with deep gratitude, that I had never seen a dull Silly Symphony; that incredible series, and the Mickey Mouse cartoons which have again risen to top rank, would seem to come out of a never-ending fountain of inspiration, each one flawless, each one a minute masterpiece. But Mr. Disney faltered once; he adapted to his fantastic screen a classic, the myth of King Midas and the Golden Touch, following the traditional fable reverently, and producing a dull, tasteless, and uninventive work. Compare it with the freehanded treatment of the "Three Little Pigs" in which the Wolf at one time announces himself as "the Fuller Brushman," a vulgar intrusion, a cheap jest, totally out of keeping with the original—yet a thoroughly justifiable episode in the "Symphony" itself.

"Ruggles of Red Gap" is a particularly interesting example of adaptation not to the screen, but to the star. The most admired moment of this picture is that in which Charles Laughton, as the English valet in the Wild West, recites the "Gettysburg Address," an episode not in the original. The preparation for the scene was brilliantly handled by the director (Mr. Leo McCarey, and Laughton's voice and port were magnificent; moreover the episode was in keeping with Laughton's

(*Continued on page* 13)

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Re-enter the Gibson Girl

PORTRAIT OF AN ERA, AS DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON. By Fairfax Downey. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1936. $3.50.

Reviewed by FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN

IT is possibly a little expansive of Fairfax Downey to call his biography of Charles Dana Gibson "Portrait of an Era," even though he qualifies the title by adding the words "As Drawn by C. D. Gibson"; for the period in which Gibson was at his brilliant best — roughly from 1890 to 1906 — was a period of striking political and economic and social change, and the illustrator's work reflected not much more than its smooth social surface. Nevertheless Gibson definitely set his mark upon the era; and Mr. Downey in this sympathetic biography makes the nature and extent of his influence clear.

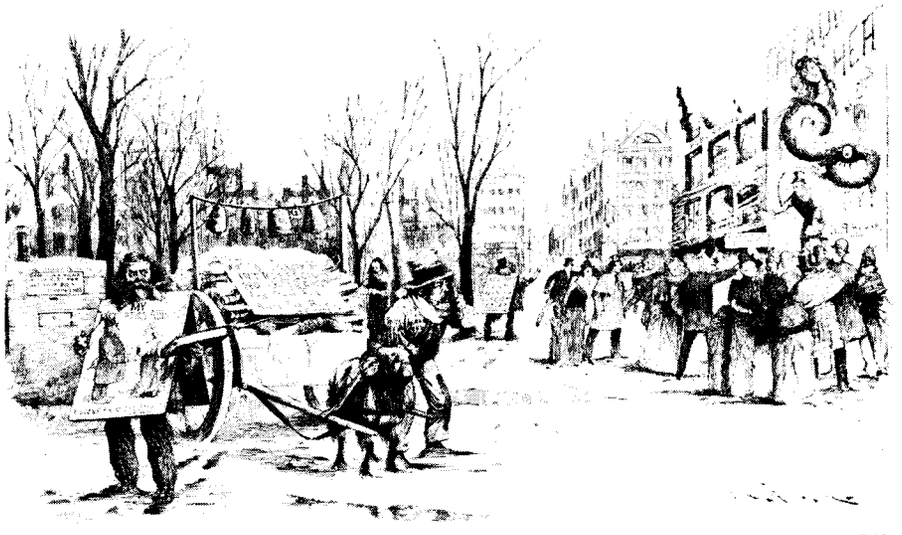
To read the story of Gibson's life to date (he is still, it is hardly necessary to say, active and sturdy at sixty-nine) is to realize how forces outside a man may conspire with forces within him to determine the success or failure of his career. Gibson rose to fame before he was thirty, not only because he was a superb draftsman whose boyhood knack for cutting silhouette pictures out of paper had been converted into a mature mastery of pen-and-ink illustration, but also because he was perfectly attuned to the social world he drew. It did not matter much that his mind was essentially conventional, his social vision superficial, his artistic gift best suited to the depiction of more or less standardized fashionable types. These limitations may even have contributed to his success. For his queenly Gibson Girl, divinely tall and most divinely fair (and incredibly innocent), was just the sort of girl whom the young men of the nineties were ready to worship and the debutantes of the nineties were ready to imitate. (And indeed she was very lovely, with a neck like a swan's, exquisitely delicate features, and patrician bearing.) Sketching her with consummate skill, offering as her admirer a young man with level gaze and hair parted in the middle and jutting jaw, and showing her that she could play golf and learn to swim and still be queenly, Gibson became a pattern-maker for the youth of the day. He earned a big income, was lionized wherever he went.

It was to his credit that a success of this sort did not wholly satisfy him. By 1905 he decided that he had enough money to make his family secure. He wanted to become a painter, and went to Paris to begin the study of the new and exacting medium. But when the Knickerbocker Trust Company crashed in the panic of 1907 his losses were such that he abandoned his dream to recoup them; and since then his career has been full of disappointments.

His illustrations for Chambers's ephemeral novels earned him scads of money, but lacked the unerring economy of line which had formerly characterized his work. Styles and tastes were changing, too, and Gibson could not change with them; essentially he remained a man of the nineties, transplanted into a later period and a little out of place in it. Perhaps something had gone out of him when he turned back from Paris; perhaps he was suffering the fate of those who are successful too early in life, try subsequently to recapture their success, and become imitators or adapters of their own work. Gibson's war cartoons and posters brought him an appointment as organizer of wartime pictorial propaganda for the United States, and in this position he showed qualities of leadership, but the cartoons themselves followed a stale convention: his flag-draped figure of Columbia seemed an aging Gibson Girl in cumbersome fancy dress. As proprietor of *Life*, in the nineteen-twenties, he was still more out of his element. In recent years he has been painting again, but hardly with the authority with which he once drew. He is living, as it were, in a prolonged sunset; beloved and respected as a man, but no longer a vital factor in American art or American life.

Mr. Downey tells his story in agreeable if sometimes over-laudatory detail, marshaling and analyzing effectively the evidences of Gibson's hold upon young men and women in his heyday. And the book is splendidly illustrated with some two hundred of Gibson's most telling pictures, which lose none of their crispness in reproduction. (Applause for Mr. Chapin of Scribner's for using good paper and for the attractive make-up of the volume.) The illustrations alone would make "Portrait of an Era" a pleasant entertainment for older readers susceptible to nostalgia for the days of shirtwaists and hard sailor hats and pyrography and *tableaux vivants*, for younger readers with a taste for social history, and for anybody who has the capacity to enjoy the almost lost art of pen-and-ink drawing. How the man could draw!

Frederick Lewis Allen is the author of "Only Yesterday" and "The Lords of Creation."



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THE MILLENNIUM FOR AMERICAN AUTHORS

Holmes, Lowell, Howells, and Browning do their own advertising in front of the ruins of publishing houses. From "Portrait of an Era."

Eminently a Victorian

THE UNEXPECTED YEARS. By Laurence Housman. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. 1936. $3.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

MR. HOUSMAN has written a preface to this autobiography in which he tries to explain, with charm but without success, why he wrote it at all. Explanations are not really necessary. The book appears to have been written out of gratitude—that is, gratitude for having been alive; and if Mr. Housman were a sentimentalist, such a book would be unreadable. But he is not a sentimentalist, and his book is immensely readable. There are questions which perhaps one ought to ask, but they don't seem to get one anywhere. For instance, is it well written? Yes, in the sense that Mr. Housman is an artist. No, in the sense that it could not possibly be compared to the great autobiographies—Gibbon's or Beyle's or Gosse's: but these are not so much autobiographies as works of art; and the moment that an autobiography becomes a work of art, it loses its gift of making life likable.

Nothing but an autobiography can do that. And only an autobiographer like Mr. Housman—who is neither a genius nor a politician nor yet a diner out, who has no secret to reveal nor scandal to defend

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—can do it in any case. He has a healthy respect for himself, and this makes the story of how he ceased to be an illustrator and became a novelist and playwright (he was always a poet) interesting for its own sake. It is interesting to know how the author of "Victoria Regina" came to be the author of "Victoria Regina"; but the virtue of the book lies elsewhere. You will find the clue to it on page 308, where he says—"I am eminently a Victorian."

Mr. Housman's book really takes us back to that period in history when man amazed himself with God and morals and Mr. Gladstone, but not with the collapse of a civilization. This period survives in Mr. Housman as a state of mind: he is deeply religious without appearing to have a creed, and instinctively decent without being a prude, and concerned with the future of mankind to the extent of being a pacifist. In other words, as a Victorian he was advanced—he is no longer under the necessity of being advanced—his view of his own past, therefore, is at once intelligent and peaceful. This gives his book its abiding charm.

The two people who haunt it most are St. Francis and the author's brother, A. E. Housman, though their actual appearances are infrequent: there are other people in it whose names are as eminent, many people with small names, and many people with no names at all. But all of them drift into the book rather than are dragged into it—Mr. Housman has not been impressed by the great nor obsessed by the anecdote. The villain is a succession of Lord Chamberlains, indistinguishable from one another, and banning between them over thirty of Mr. Housman's plays. There is no hero. I know of few books which I could recommend with an easier conscience. But why it should be so indifferently printed and so cluttered with photographs of "Victoria Regina" altogether passes my understanding.

"A Lien on Immortality"

THE BIBLE: Designed to be Read as Living Literature. Arranged and Edited by Ernest Sutherland Bates. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1936. $3.75.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

WE are but of yesterday and know nothing. We do not read except from the eyes outward. For us the epigram does not click nor does the aperçu register. We have ceased to reason. We no longer know the difference between to infer and to imply. To tickle our fancy history has been debased into anecdote and biography walks the streets best-selling herself in the frippery of the novel. Even science has put on the manner of a Long Island matron and gushes small talk about electrons into our unheeding ears. We take it all rather casually, for past all peradventure we are the people and wisdom is dying on us.

Since we no longer mark things, determined men occasionally undertake to mark them for us. Mr. Ernest Sutherland Bates is such a man. In a scatterbrained not to say schizophrenic time he thinks that the Bible, our greatest literary heritage, ought to be read—for fun if not for edification. He knows that many of us who pass for intelligent are actually, in William James's phrase, intellectual noncombatants. And accordingly he has attempted, not without success, to produce a Bible that is easy to read. With taste, discernment, and a minimum of comment, most of which is informed, and to this reviewer highly interesting, he has elucidated the huge heterogeneous work. Or rather by a sensible rearrangement he has as far as possible allowed it to elucidate itself. Of course in this he is under obligation duly acknowledged to Professor Moulton and other scholars. But he seems to me thoroughly justified in his own effort. In fact compliments are definitely in order. The whole of his undertaking is good. His arrangement "by subject-matter and chronology" is logical and self-explanatory. His omission of chronicles, chapters of tedious genealogy, and some minor documents is perfectly defensible. And though the pedantic may cavil at the gratifyingly few excisions that he has seen fit to make or at his choice of the revised versions for certain books ("Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?" gained nothing by being literally corrected), any reasonable person must hope that the casual reader will find in the book what Mr. Bates wants him to find.

But there are many obstacles. Though sadly enough for at least a generation the Bible has been tacitly or openly ignored as it never was ignored before, no man can come fresh to it. The very universality that has made it endure, the unconscious familiarity born of nineteen centuries of authority, the more than Roman conquest of men's minds which it achieved in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the more than Roman decline since the so-called era of enlightenment, have made it impossible for most of us to read it as we read other books, that is, in a spirit of moral independence. Whatever our views, materialistic or otherwise, we take the Bible, so to say, for granted. Saints can cite scripture for their purposes. And Shakespeare was the first to point out that the devil in this respect was not their inferior. The curious fact is that they both quote from the strange book in the same tone of voice. And though there be men now, not necessarily stupider than their fellows, who actually hate the Bible as a darkener of counsel and a mental narcotic, their rage is a measure of the dominion which with a reverse English it still maintains over their minds. No man in the miscalled Christian world can speak of the Bible with the detachment and intellectual freedom which might be characteristic of him in a discussion of the Koran or the Teachings of Gautama.

Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing has been not infrequently discussed. But this much has been made clear, that between the Bible and other sacred writings one profound difference exists. The other works for the most part are so to say uniform. Religion proper, or conduct, is their subject matter. But the Bible, as some have pointed out and most people have noticed, is cosmogony, history, law, theological theory, poetry, eschatology, and pure religion and undefiled, in short the most magnificent, encyclopedic salmagundi of varied interest in existence. Yet

Advice to a Gentleman

By SARA HENDERSON HAY

THE lady's heart is shy and wary of capture;
Entreat her subtly, stalk her like a fawn.
She will be most beguiled with crumbs of rapture,
By the potentials, by the feast withdrawn.

She is beset with curious alarm,
She cannot tell what is her hunger or drouth.
Assure her of the circle of your arm,
And touch her breast but do not kiss her mouth.

It is hard for her to say to any man—
Her quivering need of flight is not of reason.
There are no words shadowy enough to explain,
And she will give you her lips in due season.

Attend her—she will come to you in her fashion,
She is restive and mobile, but she is not dissembling.
Love her, if she be worth your trouble and passion,
But do not hold her against her body's trembling.

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we have never been able to separate part from part. To this day it is hard for us to see that the noble eroticism of the Song of Solomon is much like other noble eroticism. Koheleth the preacher at this moment is probably being quoted to prove that all is vanity except some one's pet orthodoxy. And the Westerner incapable of dividing religion from morality in his mind still justifies military violence by appealing to the brutal account of the conquest of Canaan as if it were part of a code of conduct which it became us to obey. We have not given up hewing Agag in pieces or throwing Jezebel down from the wall. In fact, as some one has said, we are only about half through the Old Testament, though we have been in the last hundred years pretty severe in our criticism of the Book of Genesis.

Indeed it is dreadful to think how this incredibly fascinating book has been quite literally manhandled, how meaning has been read out and in, how blind repetition has stifled all meaning whatever, how citation has hackneyed, how ignorance has abused. The Nietzsches and the Döllingers, the Holy Rollers and the Higher Critics, all interpreters, literal, allegorical, anagogical, according to their folly, have exercised the human privilege of making foolish remarks about a great thing. Nor do I see why in the face of such examples I should refrain.

Like many others Mr. Bates has hoped to lead us into a more excellent way. He wishes us to examine objectively the beauty, the poetry, the grimness, the humor, the fact, and the fancy of a book which a distinguished critic has said is not a book but a library. He has left nothing undone to help us. But so long as the magnificently mixed ideas of the Hebrews and the rhythms of the wise men of King James shape the thought in our heads and the word in our mouth it will be hard for us to view the actualities behind the book as Mr. Bates wishes us to view them. The very splendor of the great translation, the fact that it has become part of the structure of our minds, such as they are, makes it impossible for us to deal with the thoughts and personalities of the Bible as we deal with the thoughts and personalities in other great books. It can't be done objectively. And it may be not altogether a bad thing that, in a world whose ostensible tendency is to analyze and get to the bottom of things, a refractory spiritual compound should remain which defies our reagents and our litmus paper.

Erratum

By a regrettable error, a word was misspelled in the second line of Mr. Hillyer's poem "A Letter to the Editor" in last week's issue. The first two lines should have read:

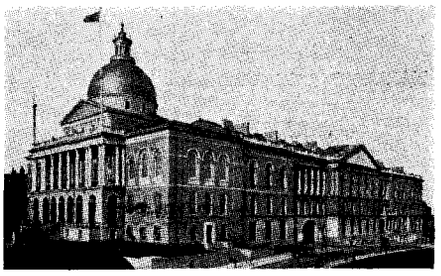
"Time brings us, Benny, to our middle years,
"Not unattuned to life or our careers."

Boston Irish

WARD EIGHT. By Joseph F. Dinneen. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE C. HOMANS

FOR a Boston and Back Bay Yankee, like the reviewer, "Ward Eight" is an education. As he grew up he was maddened by the defeats handed to his kind, Yankees, Republicans, and therefore, he assumed, patriots, by the Irish politicians and their following, who were, he also assumed, corruptionists. It happened in city elections always and in state elections more and more often, and was only one feature of a thoroughgoing, if only half-conscious, war between the older and the newer races. The stock of the Puritans, in Boston at least, had be-



WHERE THE WARD MAY LEAD

come a closed aristocracy, and like all such aristocracies would die a more or less lingering death. On the political front, if graft outraged the moral sense, it was nevertheless not the important question. The Irish and the other newcomers had feelings, ways of behaving and of thinking unlike those of the Yankees, and on the basis of these the Irish leaders were making a new application of the machinery of democratic government. Their code was not that of Sam Adams, or Daniel Webster, or Calvin Coolidge, and with the change of code the character of old institutions would change. But the Back Bay Yankee never bothered to find out what the new code was. Joseph Dinneen's book fills in the gap in his experience. It is a story of Irish politics in the North End of Boston since the turn of the century.

This is written in too solemn a vein. "Ward Eight" is not a social survey report but a novel, and an absorbing one. Old Ward Eight, hemmed in by the waterfront and the markets, was the heart of the North End. Here in these little tenements and crooked alleys had lived in turn most of the races that were making Massachusetts. Toward the end of the last century, the Irish drove out the indigenous Yankees, or rather, in a boom era the Yankees were moving out to better jobs and better houses. Twenty years later, and for the same reasons, the Irish were giving way to the Italians. A man's class might almost be reckoned by how far from the waterfront he lived.

The Boss of Ward Eight, in the novel, is Hughie Donnelly. The Ward Boss appeared in all the big cities of America in the time of the new immigration. The muckrakers made him familiar. The Boss got the people of his district jobs, kept them out of trouble and out of jail. In return, by working on their loyalties and on their fears he controlled their votes. The Ward Boss could deliver the Ward. And the man with the votes commanded the avenues to all sorts of graft. Some of this went into his own pocket, but maintaining his organization cost money too. The system was a baffling mixture of government, social service, sentiment, terrorism, and corruption.

Hughie Donnelly is the old-style politician; Big Tim O'Flaherty is the new, who goes to high school and college, and becomes a member of the bar. The old man and the young fight more than once for the control of the Ward, and the old man always wins. When it comes to the point, Big Tim does not know enough, is not shrewd enough to take over the job. But Hughie never presses his victories. He knows how to turn a defeated opponent into a loyal lieutenant, and he can use Big Tim's energy and popularity. Under Hughie's patronage, Big Tim goes up the escalator. This is the story of "Ward Eight." It is set in the life of the Irish community: the wakes, with their loud voices and stories as "antidotes for unbearable grief," the gossip that has a boy and girl engaged as soon as they go to one dance together.

The original of Hughie Donnelly is pretty clearly Martin Lomasney, the famous boss of the North End, now dead, like Hughie. Bostonians can identify other Irish politicians who appear in the Ward. Surely Callahan with the deep and sonorous voice is now one of our foremost humanitarians. But "Ward Eight" is no literal reproduction of local history, under fake names. Nor is it one which will interest only Bostonians. Anyone who likes a vigorous novel, and a description of how one little part of American society works, will read "Ward Eight."

The story ends with a twist. Hughie is dead, and Big Tim has not been able to hold the ward organization together. What is more, he has determined to cut out the grafting, and he knows that this will ruin him politically. This is not the conventional repentance of the aging sinner; it puts the question raised by the system as described. How much corruption can American democracy stand? Joseph Dinneen, in his two articles in *Harper's*, "Murder in Massachusetts" and "The Kingfish of Massachusetts," has already let much light in upon the realities of politics in that state.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Horizon Land (1)

IN 1867 a herd of Texas cattle was driven northward to meet the railroad at Abilene, Kansas, and the Long Trail was thus established. In 1874 barbed wire was invented and the open range began to be fenced in. In 1885 drought and tightening credit brought the price of steers down from $35 to $8, ruining the barons, and the cattle business began to take the shape it has today. By 1895 the social system which Walter Webb calls "the cattle kingdom" had altogther disappeared. A boy old enough to drive a chuck wagon with the first herd of longhorns entrained at Abilene could have seen the rise and fall of the kingdom and still have been no more than middle-aged when it lapsed into legend.

Before 1900 the cowboy had emerged as the final inheritor of the Western romance whose successive images had been the lone hunter, the trail breaker, the voyageur, the bear hunter, the mountain man, the gold washer, the scout, and the lieutenant of cavalry. His idiom had already been fixed by a competent journalism when Stephen Crane tried to make literature of it for the first time. In 1902, when Mr. Owen Wister assembled a novel out of some short stories and called it "The Virginian," a flood began to rise that has never since abated. The cattle trade is the only American business which has evoked a literature, a mythology, and graphic symbolism of its own. And all of them refer to a period of less than thirty years. Time need not be spent exploring reasons. The cattle business was localized in a part of the country toward which the national fantasy has always turned, it had the movement of masses under a wide sky, its common routine was both picturesque and dangerous, all its ways and folkways were tinged with strangeness. The cowboy was a free man, an individualist, an equalitarian; his necessary clothes were romantic and his necessary behavior was daring; he was an equestrian, a mounted man, and from professional necessity he carried his law, his security, and the defence of his beliefs on his thigh.

The humblest level of this literature is the cowboy story, which has produced thousands of novels and has appeared in all magazines from the *Atlantic* down to the pulps which specialize in it. Above this level you come to a kind of poetry, very bad as poetry but unpretentious and honest, expressive of the nostalgia of a frontier nation that has lost its frontier. Above that is another poetry, the balladry of the cowboy himself, usually lachrymose or obscene but as genuine a folk poetry as any America has produced, now engaging the interest of antiquarians. The next step brings you to a bulk of reminiscences, memoirs, biographies and autobiographies, expositions and descriptions, records, collections of legends and anecdotes that embody the actual experience of the cattle kingdom and are indispensable to history but only occasionally, as in the work of Andy Adams and Ross Santee, attain the stature of literature. Above this should be a stratum of imaginative interpretation, of art, but one name hardly makes a stratum and the literature of the cattle kingdom produced only one artist, Eugene Manlove Rhodes.

The cowboy story is a set of conventions and clichés which originally may have had some relation to the life it pretends to depict but speedily lost it in obedience to the fantasies of the eastern consumer. It was Mr. Rhodes's misfortune, because his novels also dealt with cowboys and herds of cattle and the life of the open range, to be grouped with these conventions and so to be dismissed. But there was this difference: his work was true to the life of the cattle kingdom, he was an artist in prose, and he portrayed both the reality and the romance of that brief era with a fidelity that only a few have ever tried to maintain and only he succeeded in maintaining. For a quarter of a century now there has existed a small, enthusiastic group of admirers of Gene Rhodes. It seems likely that they will increase as time's critical process goes on, and that he will eventually be confirmed in his rightful place, as a distinguished novelist whose material happily chanced to be the cattle kingdom. His books are its only important contribution to American literature.

Those books are, of course, a primitive literature—primitive not in technique, for he was a craftsman of the first order, and one more cause of the public's indifference to him is the intricacy of his tale-telling, but in emotional content. They deal with such simplicities as courage, endurance, steadiness of nerve and purpose, loyalty, honesty, and honor—the necessary survival virtues of the kingdom. There is a primitive separation between such virtues and their opposites which permits no half-lights and no psychological subtleties — and that too follows from the conditions of a life lived out of reach of the restraints of society, a life which had to recognize its evil at sight and to get its villains identified and out of the way just as promptly. They are primitive also in that women characters are infrequent and all but inconceivably lovely and virtuous when present—another fidelity, since that is the way the kingdom thought of its women. The books are violent as well, but they are not melodramatic: they merely embody the reality of the time and place, and there were plenty of men, some of them in high places, who wanted to go gunning for Gene Rhodes on the simple ground that he wrote history and not fiction, disguising these objectors much too little. His books have, in short, many of the characteristics of a life singularly like the one he was reporting, the Scotch border, whose songs, significantly, his heroes commonly sing.

Those books, one is confident, will get more attention as time goes on. The historians have already discovered them and recognized their quality. Literary criticism will take note of them, if they are often enough called to its attention. All other fiction of the cattle kingdom is too humble and inept, if genuine, or else mere cliché, but this is literature. Word comes that a memoir of Gene Rhodes with a collection of his letters is in preparation and will be ready in a year or two. (What ever happened to the proposed collected edition of his books?) May it introduce to those who care about American literature an artist of importance, one of the very few who have appeared in any of our horizon lands, and the only one who has dealt with the most permanently glamorous of them, the cattle kingdom. For make no mistake about it: whether or not you have ever heard of Eugene Manlove Rhodes, he was a writer who must be taken into account.

("Horizon Land," a commentary on frontier literature, will appear from time to time.)

Ten Years Ago

Willa Cather's "My Mortal Enemy" was reviewed by Lee Wilson Dodd in a late October issue of *The Saturday Review* in 1926. He described it as a story which was both *"deceptively simple and unexpectedly poignant."* Referring to its form, Mr. Dodd continued: *"It is either a very short novel, or a very long short story, of perhaps twenty thousand words; but whatever their precise number may be, it is precisely the right number, placed in the right order by an artist who knows what words are for and what can be done with them and how without seeming effort to do it. Miss Cather is a cool, scrupulous mistress of her medium, her material, and all its human, social, and philosophical overtones."*

Miss Cather's latest book is her first collection of essays, "Not Under Forty." Subtitled "Studies of Literary Personalities and Certain Aspects of Literature," it has been announced for publication this November.

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Letters to the Editor: *First Report on Local Reading*

Reading in Louisville

SIR:—Market research being my vocation, and reading (particularly the *SRL*) my avocation your editorial, "The 42nd Parallel," interested me on both counts.

As you say, statistical facts on reading habits could, with much trouble, be gathered. They would probably be out of date by the time they were analyzed; but would nevertheless offer a basis of definite facts upon which to build your structure of imaginative interpretation. Even in the business world, imagination is the most profitable asset; and its interpretive powers are used there as well as in literary research.

I think, based on my limited experience here in Louisville, that you do not realize how important the New York *dated* periodicals are in taste leadership. From inquiry at my booksellers here, the "best-sellers" are pretty nearly coincident with those of other cities.

What have the people in Davenport, Petersburg, Camden, Cheyenne, Fresno, Mauch Chunk, Sauk Center, San Francisco, Omaha, Denver, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Cornopolis, Dubuque, and Little Rock got with which to guide their selection of books? The selection is guided by the same critics, the same periodicals, all over the country. There are good books, and there are bad; and you will find people all over who will agree and disagree.

I was born in Chicago, and have lived in the Middle West all my life. I am sure that Mr. Lloyd Lewis, Mr. Sterling North, and Mr. Kurt Stein, and the other "worthies," have not had a much different critical background from mine; theirs is broader and deeper in the same kind. And I do not think Vachel Lindsay the best poet since 1912. Moreover, I am sure you could find other men, of a similar background with the previously mentioned "worthies," who would disagree with both you and them.

You don't offer only New York opinion, thank God; what you do offer is American opinion; therefore you will naturally have to offer all kinds and sorts. The only completely national things about America are its differences; emphasized differently in various parts, they are national, not merely regional.

Here in Louisville, as I say, major reading tastes are similar to the national taste. We read "Gone With the Wind." Of course, we perhaps read purely local writers, but that is a minor taste; a writer who writes well enough of a region, writes more than a regional novel or book; we read "Listen For a Lonesome Drum" here as well as our own local authors—usually more of us read the former. Few of us are rooted in a certain region for more than a generation; my own background, an average one, goes through Milwaukee to Germany and through Boston to England and France and New England.

And the most important literary journal here, as in New York and San Francisco, is *The Saturday Review*.

By the way, I think Old Q. would get a small chuckle out of a comparison of the *Trade Winds* of December 23, 1933, and the same story reprinted in the October *Scribner's* "Straws in the Winds," and credited to *The New Yorker*.

EUGENE A. LUENING.

Louisville, Ky.

"AROUND PAGE 850 SHE BEGINS TO WEAKEN BUT IT'S TOO LATE THEN."

Idealogue

SIR:—A residue of disagreement settles around your use of the word "idealogue." Although it isn't in the dictionary, the word means and implies something quite definite. May I define it for you as: "a bad idealist?" And it implies more: that idealists in general are bad.

Every generation needs some bogey man, or, as you call him, "a sure target to pot sitting down." The last generation took the zealous moralist for their bogey man, only they called him a "philistine," to be literary. And they made him responsible for most of the evils of American civilization, (as you have pointed out). But aren't you now doing the same thing? Aren't you making the zealous idealist your bogey man, only calling him an "idealogue," to be literary? And just as the earlier generation glorified the creative artist, aren't you glorifying the scientific sociologist?

The danger is in oversimplifying the situation, and confusing the terms. Actually "moralists" were bad, not because they were moralists, but because their morality was out of date. But a lot of the former younger generation attacked all moralists as "philistines," and preached free love. In the same way the new "idealogues" are bad, not because they are idealists, but because their idealism is foreign to the American facts. In attacking idealism, and calling it un-American, aren't you running the danger of preaching a new crusade to a new, and false, materialism?

Many of the greatest Americans have been avowed idealists. In philosophy Charles Sanders Pierce was one, and in literature Emerson and Whitman, to name no more. And so are you and Mr. Seldes, for that matter, when you advocate "a technology which must control industry on behalf of an expanding economy of plenty." No economy of plenty has ever existed in America—it is only an ideal, as you admit when you use the word "must." This new economy of plenty sounds a good deal like the old American Dream.

If "idealogues" are people whose ideals bear no relation to the material facts of the world in which they live, "materialogues" are people who have given up hope of shaping their materials according to any ideal. Why not take a few pot shots at the materialogues, too, Mr. Editor?

FREDERIC I. CARPENTER.

Belmont, Mass.

"Idealogue," Webster's "New International," *2d ed., p.* 1236, *cross-reference to "ideologist: a theorist; dreamer; visionary." The word "must" was not used hortatorily but to express an inherent condition of technology. The editor does not know what false materialism may be but promises to take a shot at it if it proves shotworthy.*

Avocation

SIR:—May I register a protest against such a difficult Double-Crostic as that of Sept. 26? Not many of us can make a vocation of solving these puzzles. It's only as an avocation that we can manage it.

D. S. OGBURN.

Salem Center, N. Y.

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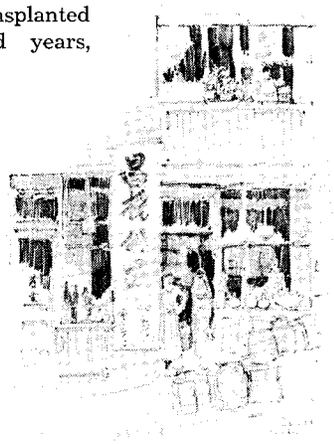
Famous Quarters of Two American Cities

SAN FRANCISCO'S CHINATOWN. By Charles Caldwell Dobie. New York: Appleton-Century Co. 1936. $5.

Reviewed by IDWAL JONES

FOR three generations this famous Quarter, a realm of bazaars, alleys, joss houses, banners, and vermilion balconies, as colorful as Soochow, but these days odorless, has kept its identity. It is pent in a sliver of space, seven blocks long, three wide. The cobbled hills of Clay, Sacramento, Washington, and Jackson streets, the cross-channels of Stockton and Grant—these always have been Chinatown, the largest outpost of Asia on this continent; once the shame and glory of San Francisco and now its pride and the repository of half its bright legends. San Francisco was old when it was young, civilization came upon it fast, but Chinatown began old, under the transplanted weight of six thousand years, and in its nine decades it has been the crucible in which the fate of a million dwellers was resolved. It has influenced countless million others, for here was the Tsing dynasty subverted, the Ming overthrown, and, for good or evil, the Republic upraised.



Drawing by E. H. Suydam, from "San Francisco's Chinatown."

All that happens here happens behind a dark glass. Charles Caldwell Dobie has been peering through the glass for years, he has even been admitted behind the doors, and seen many curious things. He has composed in "San Francisco's Chinatown" a lavish history, honestly done, without any gaps, and always with great respect for his material. He has achieved a delightful and instructive book. It interprets not only the Quarter but Chinese history and culture on the Pacific Coast, and its inquiry into the organization of tongs, into religions, esthetics, and attitudes towards life, all within the patterns of this coastal Chinatown, give it philosophic and timely value.

Dobie outlines what the Chinese had to put up with in the pioneering days. The antagonism of the Irish when the railroads were being built; race riots fostered by "Sandlots" Kearney; slayings by miners in Shasta County, by ruffians in Los Angeles in 1870; the injustice of politicians who struck at the Chinese through "alien miner" taxes, washhouse licenses, anti-pigtail measures, "sleeping quarter" laws so absurd that for a while they made the slumbers of every Chinese in the Quarter illegal. Then, again, Chinatown suffered from recurrent economic plights.

To add to the sad litany of their grievances, the Chinese were preyed upon by the more maleficent of their tongs. It must be remembered that there was no selective immigration in the pre-Exclusion Act days, and that the first wave was a backwash of refugees from the Taiping Rebellion, the ravaged Kwangtung provinces where a million lives were taken before the vengeance of the great tyrant, the Viceroy Yeh, was glutted. And all who fled here were members of the Triad Society, or Heaven and Earth Association, sworn to overthrow the Manchu rule.

Dobie keeps close to home, telling informally of the knowledge bred into him since infancy by these extraordinary people. Like all true San Franciscans he has an affection for them. He tells of their native virtues, their instinct for loveliness, triumphant even amid squalor, their magisterial touch in jade, wood, porcelain, and foodstuffs. After all, they have much in common, and the sentiment born of propinquity in a town that always was compact, and closer to the Orient in spirit than most.

But the city is not a melting-pot, it is not like Hawaii, where the Chinese youth "takes his place in mercantile life as readily as any other." The working ranks will not receive him, and except for an occasional post in a firm connected with the Chinese trade, most fields are closed to him. Dobie thinks Chinatown will in time disintegrate, but whether its handful of people will be absorbed or drift back to China, he does not know. The infiltration of the Japanese into Chinatown is slowly but steadily going on.

The problem is for the young to face. It will be tragic if they discover that wherever they may turn they will be alien. This reviewer drifted into a musty San Francisco law office the other week and found there an old and revered Chinese merchant who was saying good-bye to friends. He was bankrupt; all he had in the world was his suitcase, the clothes he wore, and a ticket across the Pacific. But his smile was beatific, he was content. For his roots were deep in the land of the Old Yellow Mother. As he left, a siren gnawed through the fog and seemed to touch his heart. It reminded him he was leaving Chinatown, and a tear coursed down his cheek, for its charm was hard to leave.

THE FRENCH QUARTER—An Informal History of the New Orleans Underworld. By Herbert Asbury. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1936. $3.50.

Reviewed by THAD ST. MARTIN

MR. HERBERT ASBURY here hands us a chronicle built on cold facts: history, newspaper files, records of the police courts. It is all truth. The records are bared dispassionately — too dispassionately. Had Mr. Asbury scratched beneath the surface and reached a heart or two — and there were hearts even in the red-light district — his multitude of unpleasant facts might have emerged as readable and entertaining as other sections of his book. For with all the wickedness and sinfulness he uncovered in old New Orleans he often succumbed to the charm of the city; when following the old well-beaten path of Louisiana history his book becomes fascinating.

No objection can be raised to the title of the book, "The French Quarter." Though why not "The Rape of New Orleans by the *Américain*"? The Creoles, pleasure-loving, hot-blooded, and by no means above reproach, were keeping their naughty little city for themselves, when the outsiders — the *Américains* — settled upon it as a blight. First the *Kaintocks* in their keelboats and flatboats, well-fortified with good old *Nongelia* — Masons, Hares, and Murels among them. Then the steamboats, with adventurers of another stripe. Later, at the end of the Civil War, carpet-bagger scamps followed on the heels of the Union Army. And their Jezebels followed them.

The real wickednesses were the wickednesses of the women. The Creoles had their Quadroon Balls. The *Américains* had had their Lizzie Collins, collecting buttons from her lover's pants, and overlooking his money; Bricktop; One-Legged Duffy, who ended by having her brains beat out with her own wooden leg. Kate Townsend, Hattie Hamilton, Fanny Sweet. Josephine Icebox . . . Thirty-eight blocks of whoredom that had seen its heyday and was nearing the end of its rope when closed in 1917. To quote from the Countess Willie V. Piazza herself, "The country-club girls are ruining my business!"

Mr. Asbury's book is the fruit of long and patient research. He has done a thorough job in airing New Orleans's dirty linen—and New Orleans had a line full—but his factual recital of underworld crime and prostitution becomes tedious before the end is reached. But if the reader has not yet discovered New Orleans in literature, this is just about as good a source as any to explore.

Thad St. Martin, a physician of Louisiana, recently published a novel dealing with the shrimp-seiners of the bayou country entitled "Madame Toussaint's Wedding Day."

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

The Folder

A YEAR ago I mentioned the bashful old barn which hides among the trees near Emily Dickinson's home at Amherst. A very spinster among barns it seemed, a wraith of cobweb colors. Madame Bianchi, Emily's niece and biographer, after much persuasion, generously allows me to print this picture — but she reminds me that this was not Emily's own barn (which is described on page 55 of Madame Bianchi's *Life and Letters* of E. D.) but her brother's.

Madame Bianchi says:—"This one, although only eighty years old, has outgrown *belonging* to anybody. It has always been guiltless of any creature save our doves—and is solely a shelter for tall ladders, birch wood, distinctive garden tools, *and* the wheelbarrow. So please don't endow it with indefensible attractions depending on Emily!"

Let's call it Emily's barn-in-law.

A Predecessor

Turning over a box of old papers, I came across a copy of our distinguished predecessor the *Saturday News and Literary Gazette,* of Philadelphia; the issue of December 30, 1837. This lively journal—four enormous pages of very small type—was published weekly at "211 Chesnut Street" by the energetic L. A. Godey, then also issuing his famous *Lady's Book.* Publishing was a contentious business in those days: Mr. Godey remarks, after printing some réclame about the *Lady's Book* editor Mrs. Hale and her new assistant Miss Leslie, "Our friends of the Press will confer a particular favor by inserting the above advertisement, as some good natured friend has been busy in circulating a report that the Lady's Book has been discontinued."

To judge by the tattered old copy which I have saved ever since my own Philadelphia days, the *Saturday News* was going strong—largely by means of plunder from the English magazines and Annuals. In three months, Godey boasts, he has published the entire contents of Seven English Annuals; and he receives "early copies of the celebrated Pickwick Papers," and a long list of other serials, "the choicest passages of which are immediately laid before our readers." Unfortunately, in this issue he has had to interrupt his reprint of Captain Marryat's *The Phantom Ship:* apparently the English *New Monthly* simply stopped running it, to avoid piracies; but he says "we will seize the first opportunity of setting sail again." He claims 15,000 subscribers, and says that the paper is so carefully packed for mailing "that the *News* often arrives at distant cities, when other Philadelphia papers have miscarried."

A problem which bothered Mr. Godey fortunately does not harass his successors. Apparently the money of different States had fluctuating values:—

> We advertised some time since to take money at par that was current in the several States in which it was issued, but we must object to Michigan. Five and ten per cent., and such like amiable little discounts, we can stand; but when it comes to 25 or 33 per cent. and "won't buy it at any price," we must object, and therefore say, don't send any more of the above notes expecting us to take them at par.
>
> Canada money has also been put into Coventry by our brokers, and they look very shy at Mississippi—but we will take the latter yet.

In spite of their vigorous assertions of independence, the eyes of Americans a hundred years ago were much on England. Mr. Laurence Housman and Miss Helen Hayes will be pleased by this note:—

> PORTRAIT OF THE LITTLE QUEEN.—We learn that the St. George's Society of New York have employed Mr. Sully, of Philadelphia, to paint for them a portrait of Queen Victoria . . . . No artist in England can surpass Sully in female portraits.

And in another column, under "European Intelligence," we read that "The dinner to the Queen at Guildhall continued to occupy a very large share of newspaporial [*sic*] attention." Another European item, not untimely even now:—

> GERMAN BOOK TRADE.—The Michaelmas catalogue of the Leipsic fair has just appeared, and comprises 3480 new works, and 58 maps, &c. The number of publishers who have ushered this mass of letter press to the world is 551.

Among the new books reviewed in that issue were the Works of Charles Lamb, with his Life and Letters by Talfourd; 2 vols., Harper & Brothers. As it is sometimes said that Elia was not appreciated in his own time (he was then just four years dead) let's quote a paragraph:—

> The prose writings of Charles Lamb—especially his essays of Elia—are so well known that commendation here would be superfluous. Wherever the language is spoken they are universally recognized as among the finest and best specimens of genuine English. As graphic pictures of what they describe they are also unsurpassed by any similar sketches; and in kindliness of spirit, they have rarely been equalled. His poems are marked by a most thorough knowledge of the elder writers, to whose productions, without any thing of servile imitation they bear a close resemblance in strength of thought and clearness of diction. The verbiage of the modern school is in all of them carefully avoided.

Among the local news in Philadelphia at Christmas 1837 this was exciting:—

> We understand that the Rail Road between this and Wilmington is so far completed, that the line will be run from Gray's ferry immediately on the close of the navigation. The facility of passing during the winter season between this and Baltimore will, we have

EMILY'S BARN-IN-LAW

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no doubt, greatly increase the travel, and induce many persons to take a trip during the winter, who have heretofore been deterred owing to the great want of proper communication.

And I like the jibe at Boston embodied in a paragraph about an actor who apparently was relished in Philly but had played to poor business in New England. "Is Mr. Vandenhoff neglected because he is *too intellectual* for Bostonians to appreciate him? Boston is losing her credit for taste. For shame, Bostonians."

I read every word of the poor mildewed old sheet with care: somehow I was hoping to find some allusion to Poe, who must have been about that time making up his mind to come to Philadelphia? But before I chuck it away and forget about it forever (one can't go on piling up old papers) I can't resist Godey's bravura advertisement. Like everyone else who ever published a literary magazine he was concerned about circulation. His attempt to solve the problem was by offering the works of Marryat, Bulwer and Disraeli as premiums. Of *Vivian Grey* he says (and I daresay correctly) "Perhaps no novel ever created a greater sensation in the reading world." Or, for 20 subscribers and 40 Dollars, the Entire Works of Sir Walter Scott. He reproaches the ignorance of his rivals who have also offered Scott as inducement. "The Entire Works of Sir Walter Scott include Poems. There are NOT 48 of his Novels."

But here, to conclude the matter, was the rocket he fired to celebrate the New Year 1838:—

A Proposition

"COMPETITION, it is said, is the soul of business. In one instance, at least, we know that it has been. When we commenced the publication of the SATURDAY NEWS, most of our immediate contemporaries, grown indolent by success, were quietly reposing on their triumphs, giving themselves no unnecessary trouble to gratify their readers. Our advent was the dawn of a new era. We flashed upon them with a brilliance which startled while it dazzled; and rousing from their long lethargy, they prepared for vigorous action. Adopting us as the exemplar, whatever we did, THEY ATTEMPTED TO IMITATE. We discarded the silly namby-pambyisms which had too long disgraced our Weekly Literature, and sought to give it a higher and better tone —THEY AFFECTED TO DO THE SAME We reprinted the English Annuals in our columns—THEY PROFESSED TO DO LIKEWISE. We offered novel and peculiar inducements to subscribers—WORD FOR WORD, OUR ADVERTISEMENT WAS TRANSFERRED TO THEIR COLUMNS. Thus things have gone on from our commencement, and whatever may be the effect on those who are engaged in the rivalry, the public must derive an advantage. We are determined NOT TO BE OUTDONE: we shall see whether we CAN BE EQUALLED!!"

The Course of True Murder

DEATH IN THE DEEP SOUTH. By Ward Greene. New York: Stackpole Sons. 1936. $2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

AN able syndicate executive who has a shrewd knowledge of American journalism, and a creative writer ranging far and wide for his material: both personalities inhabit the mind and breast of Ward Greene. And, as a writer, he never strikes twice in the same place.

He has now turned out a novel about murder (as it is subtitled) that carries a high order of suspense. But it isn't a detective story, and it isn't a "mystery" story, save as mystery resides in human nature. It may be a tale of the miscarriage of justice—but in the end you actually don't know. One thing is sure: it reveals with startling clarity how the law works and how the press works after a particularly horrible and brutal murder—how easy it is for an innocent person to have crime fixed upon him, how "rough justice" still makes its mob demands, etc.

Although the murder of little Mary Clay occurs in Georgia and the chief officials and many of the characters are Southern, the same general course of events might have taken place in any part of the United States. It bears some resemblance to the Frank case without involving any racial issue. The political ambitions involved, the hue-and-cry, the distortion of personalities in the more sensational journals, the crucifixion of innocent lives drawn into the tangle of conjecture, the venality of certain officers of the law, the extraordinary conduct of an American court trial—all these things have been spread before us in the daily prints, North, South, East, and West. The Northern point of view as opposed to the Southern point of view, in the newspaper war that starts, is here given with salient detail and a dry sense of humor. Ward Greene is acutely aware of all the ironic facts in his material.

This author writes with effective concision. His dialogue is veracious, his atmosphere accurate, his people real. The lawyer working upon the negro, Tump Redwine's "memory," and then going to the Governor with a confession to make, at the end of the story; the Governor's decision and the emotional storm raised by it; these matters that fix his doom, and then cannot avert it from the accused and sentenced Robert Hale, contribute to a strong climax. The dubiety that will irritate some with this novel seems to this reviewer to lift the book out of a class to which one might carelessly consign it. Mr. Greene has written a significant narrative concerning American justice. Incidentally, the press stuff and the speeches in court are adept reconstructions.

HUGH WALPOLE

Macabre Excursion

A PRAYER FOR MY SON. By Hugh Walpole. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1936. $2.50.

"NO warmer, more human novel," its publishers tell us, "has ever come from Hugh Walpole's pen than this tale of Rose Clenell and John, her little son, of old Colonel Fawcus, of derelict Mr. Rackstraw, of young Michael, and of the pattern of their lives against the troubled background of today." Mr. Walpole has written many warmer and more human novels, and the background, though troubled, is not of today; nor of yesterday, nor yet of tomorrow. "A Prayer For My Son" is one of Mr. Walpole's excursions into the macabre, somewhat weakened by his attempt to make it a story of mother love at the same time; and its characters (though one of them thinks that he may become a kind of English Goering, and another has been at Geneva during the League sessions) are his obedient, noncontemporary companions on that excursion. The background is the Lake District, which is also obedient—supplying now an ominous sunset, now a rainstorm, a fog, capricious suns, twisted trees, heaving hillsides, as the moods of the story dictate.

The story tells of the battle between Colonel Fawcus (an amiable and horrifying egomaniac) and the colonel's household for the right to exist independently of the colonel's will. It involves the rescuing of a small boy from a horrid fate, and it has some of the singular fascination of "Portrait of a Man with Red Hair," one of Mr. Walpole's most original books. It should make your flesh creep. It made this reader's flesh creep, noticeably if intermittently. He did not find it a very credible book—and the macabre has its standards of credibility which, though unusual, are rigid—but it made him desire to reread "Portrait of a Man with Red Hair."

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The Vandals of Hollywood

(*Continued from page 4*)

carefully worked out idea of the character of Ruggles which was totally out of the line of the rest of the picture. For the picture was an extravaganza with a touch of satire; those Westerners, that West, the siren in the gay saloon which turned into a *salon* of the Second Empire, were all fantasy; and Laughton's Ruggles was a sound, moving, faithfully human, and almost entirely unfunny, character. (I hasten to say that so far as I know, I am alone, in a universe of nearly two billion people, in thinking Laughton not amusing in this role; but that doesn't matter. Those who admire him most in this picture admire him for the positive grandeur of his manner and for the emotion of that great scene; and they are not suitable to the rest of the film.) By way of contrast, Roland Young was precisely in the tone of the picture, and the tone was correct for the essence of the book.

I do not believe that, in their famous "story conferences," the men of Hollywood very often ask themselves what is the essence or the meaning or the significance of the work they are adapting. They fasten upon a central action and the supporting episodes and in a sense they present a challenge to every writer. For if they can reproduce the effect of these elements in a novel or a play, they should also produce the effect upon the spectator which the author intended. In most of their adaptations movies are weak because they make mistakes about the bearing of certain episodes. In "The Sun Also Rises" there is a chapter devoted to a fishing trip—an almost romantic idyll, contrasting with the harsh surface of the rest of the book. It would have to be omitted from a screen version; nothing occurs. But the relation between two men is definitely established and the character of each becomes significant for the rest of the book in that chapter. A movie would have to find or invent another episode which could be translated into movement to produce the same effect. This is rarely done. In "Anna Karenina" the multitude of small incidents by which the central character was revealed were eliminated and nothing took their place so that Anna herself was featureless, a woman in a mask, who hated her husband, adored her child, and suffered for her lover.

Outsiders frequently ask why, if the movies are going to change the plot around, distort the characters, and finally drop the title, they bother to buy the original at all. They buy for the prestige and popularity which the book has won; usually they have in mind one central event which they cannot find elsewhere; they buy a biography or a historical work for the condensation of material and for incidents they might not otherwise discover. But when they have the original, they go to work on it as they do on a script made in the studio, and that process illuminates the entire problem of adaptation. It is known that sometimes half a dozen writers work on a script. I was told, in all seriousness, that in preparing the script for an American romantic film ("The Rose of the Rancho," I believe) two teams of writers were set to work simultaneously, one to do a dramatic script, one a comic, and the two were under orders not to consult one another, so that the final work would be the blending of the best portions of each product.* To us, accustomed to the sacredness of the creative process, this seems sacrilegious or absurd; to Hollywood it is sensible and even indispensable.

I once asked the late Irving Thalberg, probably the most astute master of the technical arts of production, what had led to this proliferation of adapters, and his answer was that the moment a film of any substance is begun, the studio is caught in a mill-race from which it cannot extricate itself without great loss.

> If I were producing a play [he said, in effect] I wouldn't start until the script was perfect. You bring me a play and I see it has some good points in it, but it lacks something. You work over it another year or you call in a collaborator, and then if it's right, I do it. But when I buy a book, there may be $50,000 invested at once. I give it to an adapter and in ten weeks, there may be as much as $25,000 added for his salary. Perhaps something has already been started in the way of costumes and sets; we've got to work ahead. And then if the script is a good melodrama, but lacks comedy, and my adapter can't put the comedy in, I go to someone who can; and if the script still lacks human interest or some other element, I turn it over to a third.

"MUTINY ON THE *BOUNTY*"
"A picture . . . more interesting than its original."

Obviously Mr. Thalberg's interest is in the right place: in the finished product.* He would be a fool to study the pride or the temperaments of his writers.

The single defect of this process is that many of the pictures lack unity. But in well-made films, the director manages the fusion of the various elements; he is the most important individual in the production of the picture. (There is a hierarchy of titles in Hollywood, about which the layman need not worry; by director I mean the man who is ultimately responsible for what appears on the screen, whether he is called supervisor, director, or producer). If the director has a clear idea of the significance of the whole picture, the dovetailing of the parts presents no difficulty. To gain this necessary insight, directors are now beginning to work with their writers, from the start; and the good ones will utterly refuse to start shooting a picture from a script handed to them as a finished thing. (Actors are beginning also to display a little independence; unfortunately for them, they are not as essential to the artistic success of the pictures in which they appear, and if the producers ever find this out, and discover that pictures are not made by stars, but vice versa, the player in Hollywood will be in a bad way, financially. He may, in return, get a chance to act.)

It is generally assumed that the violence done to the classics is deliberate, because the producers imagine that their public is stupid and everything has to be vulgarized or simplified for them. I fancy that a film version of "Marius the Epicurean" would, definitely, be vulgarized; but in general it is not a question of taste and intelligence, so much as a question of *time*, which determines the method of changing a novel into a movie. Films run for seventy to eighty minutes; "David Copperfield" ran a little over two hours and was an exception. Now a fairly rapid reader might do a page a minute of "Copperfield" and so get through one fourth of the book in the time allowed to the entire movie. Therefore, descriptions go out and, in good movies, nothing takes their place, atmosphere being created while action goes forward; dialogue is cut to essentials; minor episodes and minor characters are left on the cutting-room floor. But all these eliminations do not solve the problem. The reader of "David Copperfield" learns to know Micawber over a long period of time. My own acquaintance with him is probably typical: I read the book while I was going to school, chiefly inside a species of double-buggy with a canvas cover, early in the morning or in the wintry twilight; it took me two weeks, and I know all this because I ruined my eyesight, and well-worth it, too. My children met, and were overcome by the Mr. Micawber of the great W. C. Fields, in a matter of two hours. There was simply not enough time to

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* Note Dr. Nicoll's agreement: "That a filmic 'David Copperfield' or 'Little Women' could stand alone in the same way than an Elizabethan play stands apart from some Italian *novella* out of which its plot has been fashioned—that is a thought which hardly ever has come to [certain] critics of the cinema." I boggle at "filmic," but the sentiment is good.

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ASPECTS OF WILDE

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allow for delicate shadows (even if Dickens had required them).

Consider the transfer of the whipping incident, which I noted at the beginning, from a minor character to Captain Bligh of the *Bounty*. The original gives us an extremely important intellectual idea: that cruelty was the standard and the norm of human relations in the navy at that time. To show Bligh merely approving the first and most conspicuous act of cruelty shown in the entire picture would have an odd result: the spectator would have waited, for at least a quarter of the length of the picture, for the reappearance of the officer who had ordered the flogging to go on. In the book there was, so to speak, time to forget him; in the book, as he wasn't high-lighted, he did not count. If the episode was used at all in the picture, it had to be given to the principal character, and it is a tribute to Laughton and his director (Mr. Frank Lloyd) that the succeeding villainies of Captain Bligh came off so well. By the time we were in the picture, we had become absorbed in the lives of Fletcher Christian and the others, and Bligh's cruelty had become personal and torturous, more than sadistic. The total result was a picture which is, on the whole, more satisfying and more interesting than its original. (I should also add that the death of the child-wife is far more bearable in the screen version of "Copperfield," and that the whole novel, conceived as a panorama of characters, comes off very well on the screen. Mr. Hugh Walpole, almost an amateur at the job, directed the adaptation; George Cukor, one of the best of the directors, was responsible for the work as a whole.)

In taking over a play, the movies have the contrary problem: what to add, not what to omit. A play may run ninety minutes or so and as the eye is more quickly persuaded than the ear, silent versions of plays would run half as long and give the full effect. The film eliminates the Greek Messenger and it can show an assassination off-stage more rapidly than the messenger can tell about it on-stage. The film can start with the childhood of every important personage of a play and show all the events relevant to character which the play can only describe. Actually, as many of our playwrights know the screen, little has to be done. "The Petrified Forest" was transferred without loss, and with a perceptible gain in the part played by Miss Bette Davis; the plays satirizing Hollywood were remarkably acceptable to Hollywood itself. In fact the most distinguished instance I can think of, in which play and film were at odds, is the regrettable "Becky Sharp," in which the play got in the way of the book, and color, superb in itself, apparently frightened the producers out of their cinematic wits.

As I look through long lists of novels and plays made into pictures, I discover that it is impossible to establish general rules, not even about the kind of original material which will be used. On one list I find next to one another: "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," "The Fountain," and "Ben Hur." The producers will buy anything that is popular, and work very hard to make an adaptation: "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" worried producers for three years and has finally been adapted for Mr. Laughton, I believe. Mr. Goldwyn bought "The Children's Hour" in spite of the "impossible" subject matter and proved himself, as usual, the shrewdest of the producers, because he took the essence of the melodrama (which was the effect of a scandal, and not the subject of the scandal) and made an attractive, not important picture out of it. In "The Informer" there should have been nothing to attract the movie-producers and under Mr. John Ford's remarkable direction it became by all odds the most distinguished film in years (Liam O'Flaherty collaborated with Dudley Nichols, a Hollywood professional, on the script).

Nothing has been more striking than the appearance of books and plays dealing with an assortment of characters, totally unrelated in the beginning except for their setting: "Grand Hotel" was the conspicuous work in the genre. It is a type which the movies can handle better than novels can, because in the movies there is no confusion, characters quickly identify themselves and are sharply defined. The movies have made dozens of pictures within that framework (on a bus, on a liner, etc.) and will make more as more books and plays are offered. Conspicuously the movies can also do proletarian fiction in which the mass and not the individual is stressed. But the movies have never yet done a picture of the middle-class, which is also a mass, and it is up to a good novelist to provide the material.

I notice that there were two versions of "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" made in 1924. In my memory, none too certain, there is another, a one-reeler, far back in the earliest days when fifteen minutes was enough for any purpose. I think back to those sudden, galvanic pouncings on a single episode, which then constituted adaptation to the films, and I compare them with the dignified, serious efforts now being made to abstract the essence of a picture, to retain its tone and character. There are still some dreadful examples, but on the whole the movies do well by those originals from which, at the moment, they draw their most successful and most satisfying pictures. So well, in fact, that as a lover of the movies, I am perturbed. For I still believe that the movies will never do all they can do; never arrive at their highest level, until they begin to create their own material as well as they have created their own methods.

Gilbert Seldes has been a provocative critic of the movies since he wrote "The Seven Lively Arts" in 1924. His latest book, "Mainland," was reviewed in our issue of October 3.

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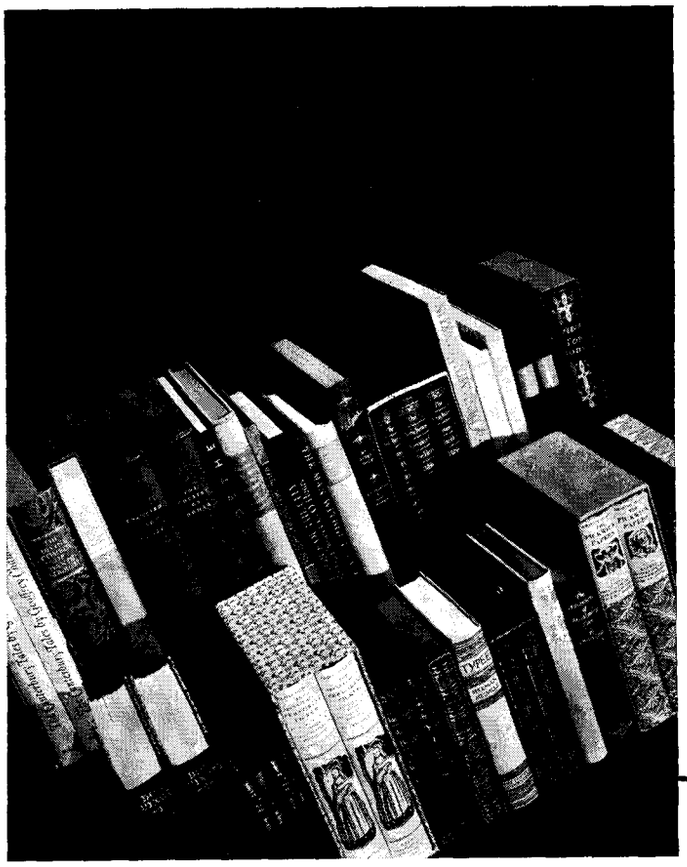

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The New Books

Fiction

THE NEW HOUSE. By Lettice Cooper. Macmillan. 1936. $2.50.

The disappearance of the dutiful daughter is an interesting—and healthy—phenomenon of today. That measureless cavern, the Victorian mansion, contained as a necessary fixture an aging and ministering daughter. She had not even the independence of the servant, who was permitted a private life on her day off; her devotion was taken for granted by herself first of all; she never questioned why her life was less important than that of her parents. Even to old age, hers was a child's life.

Into this outworn pattern of the dutiful daughter Rhoda Powell was unconsciously fitting as her mother's sister had fitted in the latter days of Victoria. Rhoda's gay father was dead; her brother Maurice was married; her younger sister engaged; her spoilt and demanding mother expected her continued immolation. And it might have continued, if they had not been obliged to move out of the house in which Rhoda's childhood had been spent. On that day of moving, "suspended between two lives," Rhoda suddenly perceived that the destiny which she had accepted could almost as easily be altered as the arrangement of the furniture which had endured as long as she could remember. She saw suddenly that giving up one's life to others was not virtue but cowardice, an evasion of the responsibility of being a whole person. And so Rhoda made her stand.

Perceptive and sensible, showing excellent observation and talent for characterization, this is a good book by a good writer. There is inexperience here and at moments too much of the staleness of the lives and minds of women of whom not enough is exacted daily in intelligence, in straight thinking, in imagination; too often, minuscule details of housekeeping are recorded with a kind of defiance, as if they must be important because they take time, though as the author herself knows they are merely defences against being alone with one's real concerns. Yet, though it shares some of the faults of the semi-autobiographical novel which all clever women—especially Englishwomen—seem able to write, it offers high hope for other books.

K. S.

THE OLD ASHBURN PLACE. By Margaret Flint. Dodd, Mead. 1936. $2.50.

This is a novel of the Maine soil, toned up with a dash of adultery and somewhat surprisingly smartened towards the end by low off-stage rumblings of nymphomania. Still, it remains a simple novel, with characters saying "How are ye?" and "Don't spose 'twas," a lot about getting in pumpkins and squash, weather, changing seasons, salt pork, baked beans, dried-apple pies, and lush descriptions of the jelly and pickles in the cellar. These farm novels have a way of sounding pleasantly cozy;—plenty of butter and eggs on hand, food stored up for winter, the kitchen warm from the crackling stove, geraniums blooming in sunny windows, and someone coming in with pails of warm milk; never a hint of how a chicken house smells or what it's like to clean out stables.

The Ashburn problems were more hu-

(*Continued on page* 21)

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
DEATH IN THE BACK SEAT *Dorothy Cameron Disney* (Random House: $2.)	Upon arrival of N. Y. couple, bent on quiet holiday, sleepy Conn. countryside explodes in maelstrom of murder—solved by vacationists.	Solution a bit on shady side of detective story ethics but action, suspense, and general spookiness are irreproachable.	Hard to beat
THE WHEEL THAT TURNED *Kathleen Moore Knight* (Crime Club: $2.)	Pizen, hatchet, and knife account for several hapless Cape Codders before S'lectman Macomber and "off-islander" locate killer.	As shivery a passel of gashly high-jinks in creaky farmhouse as you'd want, with interesting—if slightly dunder-headed-sleuthing.	Superior article
MOONS OF GOLD *C. S. Montanye* (Lippincott: $2.)	Capt. Valentine, gentleman crook, chases gorgeous opals from Paris to China with murder at his elbow.	Deftly constructed Raffesque tale with a likable hero, bing-bing action, and numerous gaudy situations.	High class melo
MURDER IN MESOPOTAMIA *Agatha Christie* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Archeologist's wife slain on expedition with every member a suspect. Hercule Poirot conveniently happens by.	No Poirot story can be dull, but this one has the most improbable plot and weakest characterization of all.	In and out

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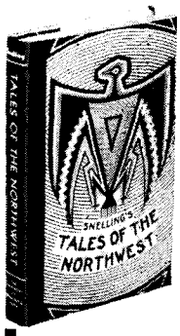

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Art of the Night

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

With this issue the editors welcome Mr. Nathan as a regular contributor to The Saturday Review. *"Art of the Night," scheduled to appear every second week, is designed to close one of the most serious gaps in literary criticism, the nature of which Mr. Nathan discusses in his first article.*

WITH the inauguration of this department, it may be profitable to inquire into the moot question as to just what is literary drama and what is not. Literary critics who loftily abstain from the theatre seem to believe that, paraphrasing Shaw, a literary play is any play, good or bad, written by a recognized literary man. Drama critics, on the other hand, who devote themselves so exclusively to the theatre that they have no time for belles-lettres, seem to believe that literary drama is anything, particularly if it isn't good, that is written either in verse or poetic prose or that contains dialogue of more than two lines to each speech, which obviously necessitates a producer's importation of foreign actors to negotiate it. Publishers customarily veer between the two points of view, with an especial prejudice in favor of such plays as are written by the favorite authors on their lists who have never written a play before and still do not know how to write one.

It is thus that almost any play published by a reputable publisher and written by a reputable novelist who cannot write a play is generally accepted in a vague way by literary critics as representing literary drama. And it is thus that almost any good play published by any kind of publisher which has been written by a writer who has dedicated his talents specifically to the theatre and which has enjoyed a long and highly prosperous run is equally generally condescended to by such critics as something perhaps quite all right in its way but hardly deserving of the august attention of the literary commentator.

This doubtless accounts for the disinclination of literary critics to review published plays that have received a healthy theatrical production. And this also doubtless accounts for the peculiar fact, regularly discernible, that when they review a published play at all it will usually be found to be one that has been rejected by theatrical producers and that, were it to be produced, would make any enlightened drama critic, to say nothing of even a less enlightened audience, derisively laugh his or its head off.

While the statement may wear a vexatious low-comedy falseface, experience with modern critical practice persuades us to believe that drama becomes literature only if and when it is at least seventy-five years old. Anything else, apparently, may become literature and be accepted as such the moment it is off the presses, but drama, whatever its quality, has to wait. The hypocrisy which collaterally insists that simply because a play continues to live it therefore proves itself to be literature is self-evident. The farce, "Charley's Aunt," has assuredly lived, as the word goes; it is still played all over the world; and it is approximately as much literature as Mary-had-a-little-lamb or the speeches of the Rt. Hon. William Lemke. From all present indications, indeed, "Charley's Aunt" will probably live very much longer than, say, any of the plays of Franz Werfel, but that surely does not imply that "Charley's Aunt" has literary merit and that Werfel's plays have none. Literature, for all the opacity of criticism, both literary and dramatic, is in constant theatrical birth, but criticism is often too snobbish, too vaporous, and too full of cant to allow itself to recognize it. It may wear many odd faces, some of them momentarily deceptive, but an open and practised and perceptive eye should be able to see it for what it is.

It took criticism years to decide that much of Shaw's drama was literature and an equal number of years to alter its decision that most of Pinero's was. It will similarly in all likelihood take present-day criticism a full quota of years before it perceives that dramatic literature is growing under its very nose. The effort of this department will be directed toward the brushing away of this critical cloudiness. The further effort will be the distinguishing of what, in the examples of literary drama that are brought to public notice, is critically sound and what is critically bogus. Let us, in a word, throw off the old school- and class-room standards and give the new and worthy literary drama, when we occasionally get it, its critical chance and critical due.

There is, for example, to be produced and simultaneously published in book form, at the moment this journal comes off the presses, a play by a new young writer—it is his first work—that should meet with the satisfaction of those critics of the drama who hold that drama and literature may properly be Siamese twins. Its title is "Daughters of Atreus"; its author is a tall, tow-headed, apple-cheeked young man named Robert Turney. And it is, unless I have been getting by as a dramatic critic for nigh unto thirty years under false pretenses, one of the best first efforts in the dramatic-literary line that has come the way of the American theatre in some time. What the theatre will do with it, the one way or the other, remains to be seen; but that it will, if the stage should possibly fail it, act itself pretty handsomely from out the printed page is a reasonably safe critical assumption.

The play consists in a paraphrase of the Agamemnon-Electra legend, but not in the sense that such a play as O'Neill's "Mourning Becomes Electra" or the Greek recastings of the German Hasenclever and the French Lenormand are paraphrases. It seeks no more or less literal identity with modern personages and modern times, nor does it essay to adapt its phraseology to the current lingo. Its intent—and I believe much of its achievement—is the recapturing in terms of modern dra-

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maturgy and the resources of the developed theatrical stage of the essentials of the famous legend, and the expression of the recapturing in English touched with poetic beauty.

Young Turney has set himself no easy job and here and there its difficulties momentarily try his skill. That he himself has appreciated the rubs of the task is evident from the fact that, in the two years he has been applying himself to it, he has written no less than six different revisions of his play. In the last of them that I have read there are still minor indications of uncertainty, but nonetheless there emerges the uncommonly interesting literary-dramatic performance that I have noted. Upon reading it, Sean O'Casey, the illustrious Irish dramatist, sought to express his enthusiasm in an article "I found this," he wrote me;

> to be a play! I forget whether or no you mentioned it to me when I was in New York, but I find you do in a recently published article. It is, in my opinion, one of the best things I have read for a long time. I wrote an article called "I Spy a Fine Play" about it, but the papers here in London weren't interested, so I got the article back. The English theatre is a deceased theatre.

Of the new American plays announced for production this season that I have looked at in manuscript "Daughters of Atreus" is thus far and by all odds the best. It aims high and it often hits the mark. But it will demand the best of casting, the best of acting, and the best of direction if it is not to droop theatrically.

The Clearing House

CONDUCTED BY AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be directed to Miss Loveman, in care of The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION FOR A WEEK'S READING

MEN AND BRETHREN. By James G. Cozzens. *Harcourt, Brace.*

A YANKEE SAINT. By Robert Allerton Parker. *Putnam.*

THE STRANGE DEATH OF LIBERAL ENGLAND. By George Dangerfield. *Random House.*

Through F. L. S. of Chicago, Ill., *comes the following request: "I would greatly appreciate your forwarding to me a list of historical readings (novels) that deal with the different periods of American history."*

THERE is, of course, a vast amount of literature which takes the American past for its subject, and which in a way may be regarded as historical even though none of the specific incidents it recounts or personalities it introduces have any basis in fact. Into this category fall the romances which depict the general background of American life, such books as Horatio Colony's FREE FORESTER (Little, Brown), a novel of pioneer Kentucky, in which the lusty, brawling life of that period is set forth with vim and meticulous adherence to truth, Elizabeth Madox Brown's THE GREAT MEADOW (Viking), another saga of pioneering which carries its characters from Virginia into Kentucky, Christopher Ward's THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF JONATHAN DREW (Simon & Schuster), an animated and veracious chronicle of the journeyings of a youth in that great trek which carried New England to the Middle West, and a dozen other books of similar sort. Here while the backdrop is drawn with a strict regard for the faithfulness of the portrayal, episode and characters are purely imaginative. Then there is that other literature—on which I shall focus in the following lists—which introduces into its narrative actual events and personalities. The line of demarcation between the two is frequently shadowy, and perhaps the distinction I am drawing is a non-existent one; at any rate it attempts to establish a difference between the novels which center on definite episodes of the national history and those which have to do with broad general movements.

To go back to the beginnings and Columbus. There is a novel by James Fenimore Cooper, neglected as are the greater part of his tales outside of the sea stories

No. 2 in a series of excerpts from the novel of Elizabeth's most fascinating courtier.

"She could swear in a voice remarkably like her father's, she could bark out her orders, or croon a light endearment, she could, if need were, make her voice a trumpet call to arms. But the voice in which she repeated 'Brightnefs falls from the air' was one that few had ever heard."

Elizabeth the Queen is talking to Sir Walter Raleigh in NORA LOFTS' *beautifully written historical romance . . .*

HERE WAS A MAN

Now at all bookstores —$2.50— ALFRED A. KNOPF

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and the Leatherstocking Tales, which takes the first voyage to America of the Discoverer as its theme. MERCEDES OF CASTILE is one of the minor works of its author and the interest it possesses is almost entirely that of its subject. Still, since romances of the sort are not numerous, F. L. S. might note this for the early period together with Mary Johnston's ADMIRAL OF THE OCEAN SEA (Little, Brown), which builds its plot about the voyagings of Columbus, with scenes laid as well at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. Then, coming along in time, there is Ford Madox Ford's THE "HALF MOON" (Doubleday, Doran), a portrayal of the North America of Hudson the Navigator, with cutbacks to English life under James I, and Mary Johnston's CROATAN (Little, Brown), an account of the voyage from Plymouth and the settlement in Croatan in Raleigh's time. Mary Johnston is one of those authors whose works fall into that half land between romance with a historical background and historical romance of which I was talking before. Her tales of early Virginia, once immensely popular and still read—TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, PRISONERS OF HOPE, AUDREY (all Houghton Mifflin)—introduce very incidentally figures of the period such as the Byrds and Evelyns, and very vividly the customs and society of the time. The Englishman, David Garnett, some few years ago published a novel which took its title from its heroine, POCOHONTAS (Knopf), and which while rather wooden as fiction was a careful building up of background. Mr. Garnett, having sedulously combed literature for the facts of his story, and having studied the map carefully for its setting, came over to the United States after his novel was written to check up on his portrayal. The book has striking scenes and makes a careful attempt to discriminate between fact and legend. For the time of the French and Indian Wars there is Cooper again with THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS, which plays about the Lake George-Fort William Henry region, and Grace Zaring Stone's COLD JOURNEY (Morrow), a tale of the Deerfield Massacre and of the journey of the inhabitants of the ill-fated town to Quebec.

And now we have reached the first great watershed of American history—the Revolutionary War. As might be expected there is a plethora of books, and as might be expected my space runs out as I reach them. More next time.

The Compleat Collector

RARE BOOKS: CONDUCTED BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Fine Printing and is conducted by Carl Purington Rollins

Among the Catalogues

MONEY is not the only Castoria for which public and institutional libraries cry. They like shelfage, and when they have enough of it they tenderly shelter every bookseller's catalogue that comes their way. Lacking such linear abundance as heart might desire, they preserve only such catalogues as manifest in ponderable degree the skill and intelligence of a merchant seeking a market for his wares among a clientèle which, he may be pardoned for hoping, is itself not utterly lacking in those attributes.

The specialty catalogue, if soundly specialized, distils these essences in quantity sufficient to give them a longer lease of life than is vouchsafed the catch-as-catch-can compilations. It is a pleasure to present here a group of eminently preservable catalogues from among the first fall offerings of New York dealers—catalogues, it need hardly be added, as well worth retention by the individual collector as by the librarian.

Collectors' Bookshop of 37 West 47th Street, New York, offers 147 "First Books by American Authors" in a catalogue that is amply buttressed with readable and bibliographically important notes. The number of contemporary writers whose fame is rooted in prose but who blossomed initially and untimely in verse is significant of something or other. Some of these tentative thrusts are familiar—Morley's "The Eighth Sin" ($175), Miss Cather's "April Twilights" ($60), Hemingway's "Three Stories & Ten Poems" ($125), Mencken's "Ventures into Verse" ($150, presentation), Santayana's "Sonnets" (two copies, variant bindings, $25). Others, however, are at least moderate surprises to the incognoscenti—Ring Lardner's "Bib Ballads" ($12.50), Meredith Nicholson's "Short Flights" ($8), Martha Ostenso's "A Far Land" ($3), Elizabeth Madox Roberts's "Under the Tree" ($7.50), Evelyn Scott's "Precipitations" ($6.50), and William Allen White's "Poems by Two Friends" ($20, presentation copy from Mr. White's collaborator, Albert Bigelow Paine). And by way of rule-proving exception, there is a poet who began his career with a novel: Sidney Lanier and "Tiger-Lilies" ($32.50).

Dauber & Pine of 66 Fifth Avenue offer a 1553-item catalogue, "The Confederacy," based on the collection of the late Jay Zorn—a striking instance of one man's devotion to a cause that is far from lost bibliographically. Here are 18 lots under Jefferson Davis, 29 under Stonewall Jackson, and 51 under Robert E. Lee. The collection is particularly rich in Southern poetry (370 items).

"First Editions of Juvenile Fiction 1814-1924," issued by the Scribner Book Store, 597 Fifth Avenue, lists, in addition to several familiar titles, 13 Horatio Alger entries, earliest and costliest of which is "Bertha's Christmas Vision" (1856, $8.50), seven Harry Castlemons, 16 Edward S. Ellises, nine G. A. Hentys, nine Elijah Kelloggs, and 11 Kirk Munroes, among them "The Flamingo Feather" (1887, $27.50). The presence of Charles E. Carryl's "The Admiral's Caravan" (1892, $22.50) accents the absence and the rarity of "Davy and the Goblin." A big majority of the 333 lots are priced at under five dollars each, but a high average is established by the inclusion of a copy of "Huckleberry Finn" in first edition, inscribed nineteen years later, but still worth $1,000.

Maurice Inman of 620 Fifth Avenue issues a catalogue devoted entirely to titles (not necessarily in first edition) based on the Grolier Club list of one hundred books famous in English literature (including the American) and A. Edward Newton's schedule of one hundred good novels.

Alfred W. Paine of 113 East 55th Street presents his twelfth catalogue of books relating to salt water with only five titles listed under "Bounty." One- and two-dollar lots are numerous among the 423 citations, which are by no means confined to first or early editions—one section is devoted to the best new books on the sea.

From the new house of Retz and Storm of 598 Madison Avenue issues Catalogue Number One which, while more varied in content than any of the others here listed, merits inclusion both by way of being different and because this department has a partiality for Catalogues Number One. The 150 entries extend from Thomas Bailey Aldrich to William Butler Yeats and include American and English literature, Americana, and autograph letters, particularly of presidents of the United States. A business letter of Andrew Jackson written June 6, 1845, two days before his death, is priced at $250.

Philip C. Duschnes's Catalogue 22, issued from the top floor of 507 Fifth Avenue, is an excellent cosmogony of American and English first editions and fine press books. Particularly appealing is the special code word: "Recovery."

A. EDWARD NEWTON

Bibliography and *pseudo*-Bibliography

(Rosenbach Lectures, 1936)

The book collecting "game" with some of the absurdities of bibliomania, the fun to be had with book catalogues, and a discussion of essayists, particularly Montaigne and Lamb—in Dr. Newton's inimitable style.

$2.00

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS :: PHILADELPHIA

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The New Books

(*Continued from page* 16)

man than agricultural. Charlie Ashburn bears the brunt of farm and home life while the other Ashburns go off to work, to college, or to get married. Charlie never married. He loved the wrong girl. Charlie had a lot on his hands, because there was trouble in spite of having food in rude plenty, in spite of Spring coming. There are a good many Ashburns, notably Pop who sits by the fire and makes caustic, oblique comments about skunks in the hen-roost which can readily be identified as referring to human behavior. Pop is a regular old character. All the Ashburns are "characters," the hitch being that none of them seems real nor their problems vital, and whether or not Charlie likes October becomes of passing, if any, interest.

This won a ten thousand dollar prize. Ten grand is a lot of money for a dilute solution of (three parts) "As the Earth Turns" and (one part) "Desire Under the Elms."

C. M.

Miscellaneous

PHYSICIAN, PASTOR, AND PATIENT. By George W. Jacoby, M.D. Harpers (Hoeber). 1936. $3.50.

Dr. Jacoby, a distinguished New York neurologist and psychiatrist, has written before this a book on the relation of medicine to education, another on the relation of medicine to law, and now this third and timely volume on the relation of medicine to religion—timely because during the past thirty and more years there has been a drawing together of physicians and clergymen in joint efforts to remedy human ills whether of the body or the spirit. Dr. Jacoby brings to his task a ripe experience and a broadly human outlook. He is one of the many doctors nowadays who welcome any and all means of assuaging human suffering. Their one aim is to prevent disease and help or heal the sick.

This book has informing chapters on the differences and common ground of religion and medicine, on the physician's calling, and on religion and the patient. The last of these early chapters gives a fine résumé of the stories of primitive medicine and religion, of Egypt as the mother of medicine, of Babylon and its priest-physicians, and of medicine and religion in Greece, India, China, Japan, Arabia, Rome, and in Europe during the Middle Ages, as well as the matter of health in the modern Orient. Brief chapters follow on birth control, suicide, steri-

(*Continued on page* 23)

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 133)

ADAMS—"THE LIVING JEFFERSON."

What gave Jefferson his profound importance in his own day, as it does now, was his view of human life. He was, and still is, the greatest and most influential American exponent of both Liberalism and Americanism.

BE GLAD YOU'RE NEUROTIC

By Louis E. Bisch, M. D. "Neurotics have the best chance of success if they only know how to grasp it," says Dr. Bisch, prominent New York psychiatrist, and in this book he tells how. He points out that neurotics furnish the world with its geniuses and that every neurotic has the possibilities of greatness in him. Dr. Bisch shows how you can capitalize on neurosis by using the special capabilities which the neurosis itself reveals. $2.00

RICH LAND, POOR LAND

By Stuart Chase. "This is a marvel of a book, text clear as crystal. Fascinating."—*The Nation.* "A dramatic narrative."—*Marquis W. Childs.* "Probably the biggest subject in any of his ten books. . . . Among the best he has written."—*New Republic.* "A brilliant performance."—*N. Y. Times.* Illustrated. $2.50

TOWARD SOCIAL SECURITY

By Eveline M. Burns. A readable non-technical discussion of the new Social Security Act. "Vigorous, vitalizing exposition. Will enlarge and enrich any reader's understanding. Eminently readable."—*N. Y. Times.* $2.00

THE NEW TECHNIQUE of SCREEN WRITING

By Tamar Lane. "A thorough, well-informed, readable, popular guide to the writing and marketing of movie material."—*John Howard Lawson.* $3.00

DOGS: Their Care and Training, Breeds and Selection.

By A. W. Meyer, D.V.M. "Specific, helpful advice throughout the entire volume. . . . For the layman dog owner it is ideal."—*Dog World.* 32 illustrations. $2.50

GRAPHIC DESIGN by Leon Friend and Joseph Hefter. 800 illustrations. $7.50

WHITTLESEY HOUSE
McGRAW-HILL BOOK CO., NEW YORK

Just Out!

This year's U. S. CAMERA is an arresting 225-page picture gallery that will excite every lover of fine photographs and fine books. Every field of photography is represented in this collection of the best American black and white, and color photography.

The 15,000 copies printed last year were sold within a month of publication. This year more than half of the entire printing of 25,000 copies was subscribed before publication. Make sure of *your* copy now. The price is $2.90.

U. S. CAMERA · 1936

FOREWORDS BY DR. M. F. AGHA AND EDWARD STEICHEN

and published by Morrow

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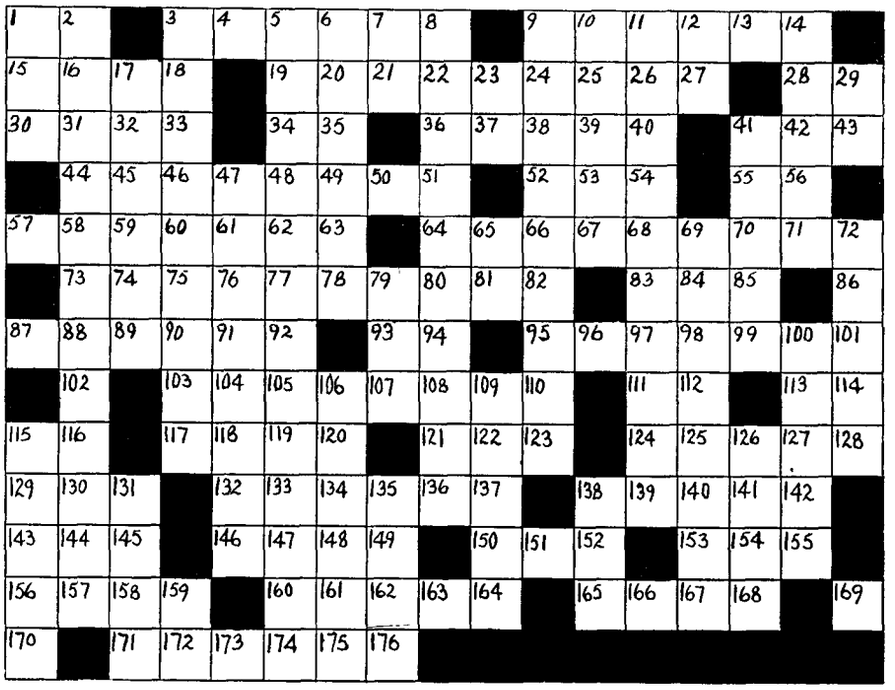
Double-Crostics: No. 134

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 21 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

I. A racing meet.

II. Pertaining to soil conditions.

III. Instrumentality for acquisition of knowledge.

IV. Quick and sharp retort.

V. Sliding step.

VI. Soaring in spirit.

VII. Thwart.

VIII. Petulant.

IX. High-sounding; pompous.

X. Character in "Midsummer Night's Dream."

XI. Nonsense.

XII. Self-attainment of salvation.

XIII. Recently scythed (comp.).

XIV. Confused.

XV. Extreme; uncompromising.

XVI. Propose.

XVII. Examine critically.

XVIII. Poetic for thither.

XIX. Composer of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice."

XX. Belt of coral islands.

XXI. Habitat of skeptics.

XXII. Russian composer (1837-1910).

XXIII. Expenditure.

XXIV. Messenger of Zeus and Hera.

XXV. Irrational number.

WORDS

152 116 123 149 84 39 133 118

162 129 143 89 121 93 19

35 37 136 52 154 56 24

126 169 88 30 8 142 63

156 69 99 55 81

132 2 108 148 48 153 53 17

103 18 42 3 67 58 127 76 120

161 141 70 95 23 73 51

6 45 113 163 66 134 144 157 94 62

158 114 122 130 147 138 60 79 11 40 4

98 166 172 100 86 137 151 43 13

102 135 160 173 170 85 22 38 31 16 34 117

14 159 165 32 90 83 65

9 131 112 77 155 5 27 92 128

25 72 29 7 78

82 47 36 171 10 107 139

28 57 44 125

176 104 21 174

145 109 168 61 91

75 12 46 175 105

41 80 124 50 96 71 140 59

150 1 146 26 119 111 164 115 15

20 87 74 101 106

49 167 68 110

33 64 97 54

Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

ARGUS Bookshop, Chicago, reports A. Edward Newton ahead in its First Edition Popularity contest for books announced for this autumn. Every order received was reckoned as one vote. Latest score: A. E. N. *Bibliography and Pseudo-Bibliography*, 102. Millay's *Conversation at Midnight*, 65. ☞Miss Millay's book however has been postponed to 1937.

☞M. K. gave Old Q. a clipping from an English trade paper that when opening a public building recently, Princess Mary asked if she might forego the useless gold key usually given on these occasions and accept instead a set of Trollope. ☞A big holiday number should be Little, Brown's *Bounty Trilogy*, viz. the three famous Nordhoff-Hall books in one volume for 3 bucks. ☞Alfred W. Paine, the Salt Water Bookseller, is now open at his new quarters, 113 East 55. The first thing we intend to do when life gets More Abundant is track Mr. Paine for a Findlay's *Directory of the North Atlantic*. ☞This is (or should be) an age of Satire, and we like this announcement: "For readers who appreciate the lethal thrust and for writers who wish to administer it," Edgar Johnson is giving a course of lectures on The Analysis of Satire at the New School for Social Research, Wednesday evenings at 8:20. ☞We ourself once shot out word that we were "a satirist manqué" but it got into the papers as "a satirist monkey."

☞Jack Edwards, of Morris Sanford's bookstore in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, says they had an exciting time when *I Am the Fox* was published. He says: "The author lives at Mt. Vernon which is twenty miles from Cedar Rapids. Consequently we are the logical place for special promotion work to center. Our shipping department was completely snowed under on publication date. Our advance orders were 250, and in addition there were a great many sold in the store the same day." ☞Morris Sanford recently bought the library of the late Luther Brewer, about 5000 volumes, and are opening a much enlarged Old Book Room. Mr. Brewer had a very fine Leigh Hunt collection which went to the University of Iowa.

☞The Press of the Woolly Whale has left our genial 45 Street and moved to 415 Lexington Ave. ☞The Spiral Press is printing the Amherst College Library's bibliography of Robert Frost. There will be 550 copies at $3 and 100 autographed copies at $5. ☞Helen Cohan, who did such remarkable work at Rudge's in deciphering and textualizing Boswell's disorderly MSS for the now famous *Boswell Papers*, has joined the staff of William Morrow & Co., on the manufacturing side. ☞Mr. Halsey Stevens amusingly suggests that the knock-knock game was first played by the porter in the foreboding scene in *Macbeth* (Act II, Scene 3.) ☞Old Q is pleased by the increasing tendency (ably fostered by the National Association of College Stores) of the college co-ops to carry trade books as well as textbooks. The trade publishers will do well to keep an eye on the N. A. C. S. magazine, *The College Store*, edited by D. G. Lyman.

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The New Books

(*Continued from page 21*)

lization, sex education, euthanasia, vivisection, and other subjects important to both physician and clergyman because of the moral, social, spiritual, and hygienic questions involved. The final chapters are on modern religion in daily life and on the outlook for future medical and religious coöperation. Both professions will profit by reading this book, and there should be no need of Dr. Fleming's plea for a moratorium in preaching if the clergy absorb its wealth of ideas and distribute it from their Sunday pulpits.

F. P. (M.D.)

Travel

TRANSCARIBBEAN. By Louis J. Halle, Jr. Longmans, Green. 1936. $3.

Mr. Halle was a thoroughly amateur tourist when he commenced his tour through Guatemala, El Salvador, and British Honduras, but he seasoned quickly, to his own and the reader's loss. The exhausting climate, the officials, the arduous journeys towards destinations ill chosen, soon pared his zeal for travel, but not before he had seen a variety of ancient cities and even more ancient tribes. The Indians of Guatemala today are very little different from those conquered by Cortés. "Nowhere," says Mr. Halle, "does the study of archæology come closer to the study of anthropology than in the hills of Guatemala."

There were astonishing white men living in the jungles the author visited, not least among them an old priest who read Dos Passos and had, he said, the revolutionary proof of contact between the Mayas and Incas, but even more interesting than the people were the birds which he has observed and described excellently.

Were this traveler's adventures all as lively as his writing the book would certainly be one of the best of its sort to have appeared in several years, for his style is swift and clean and professional, and his exploits are frequently tourist-amateur.

H. D.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept. Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

SILVERMINE TAVERN AND GALLERIES, Norwalk, Conn. Tel. 2300. An old time country inn. One hour from N. Y. Booklet R on request.

'WILL ROGERS ENTERS HEAVEN" is probably America's greatest short story. I have some copies. Will sell for a quarter each, postpaid. Harold Champer, Gallipolis, Ohio.

IF GRAMMAR bores you try "Commonsense Grammar" (Aiken). $2.00. Besides being painless it is amusing. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York.

FORM CONTACTS—employ evenings profitably. Interesting piano instruction—beginners, advanced. Manuel. Bernard, 39 W. 54.

PERSONALS

"DON'T SNORE"—Small, gold device. Prevents snoring, mouth-breathing, $1.00. Satisfaction guaranteed. Circular free. D. K. Thaxly Company, Washington, D. C.

MAN OF WIT, courage, and silence needed for secret but honorable task. Help! Box 608-B.

BACHELOR, middle age, bookish, outdoorish, would like to exchange letters about hobbies, interests, what-not, with mature minded young woman. Box 609-B.

PROTESTANT, lady companion, secretary. Home or office. Will chaperone travelling youngsters, or fill household position, aid depleted coffers. Box 610-B.

HOME WANTED—for two Siamese cats. Preferably in the country near New York. Please state qualifications. Box 616-B.

GIRL PLAYS ACCORDION, Sings. Needs free coaching, Manhattan. Miss Key C.

CONNOISSEURS, GOURMETS, people who know coffee . . . famous blend, rich, winey taste, unforgettable aroma. Not available in stores. Send one dollar for 3 pounds, postpaid within 300 miles (Beyond add 7c for each 300 miles up to 1800. Over 1800, add 35c). Richard H. Toeplitz, 67 Broad Street, New York.

YOUNG MANHATTAN PHOTOGRAPHER, trained, imaginative, broad interests, with car, will illustrate your material in her vivid and convincing medium. Experienced in wide range of subjects. Collaborate with author or group. Box 596-B.

WANTED: A young woman of superior capabilities and personality desires position as companion in travel. Best references. Reply Box 33, Ascutney, Vermont.

YOUTH wants letters from maturity. Fred.

EDUCATED MINNEAPOLIS GIRL wishes correspondence with single, refined gentlemen in thirties. Box 601-B.

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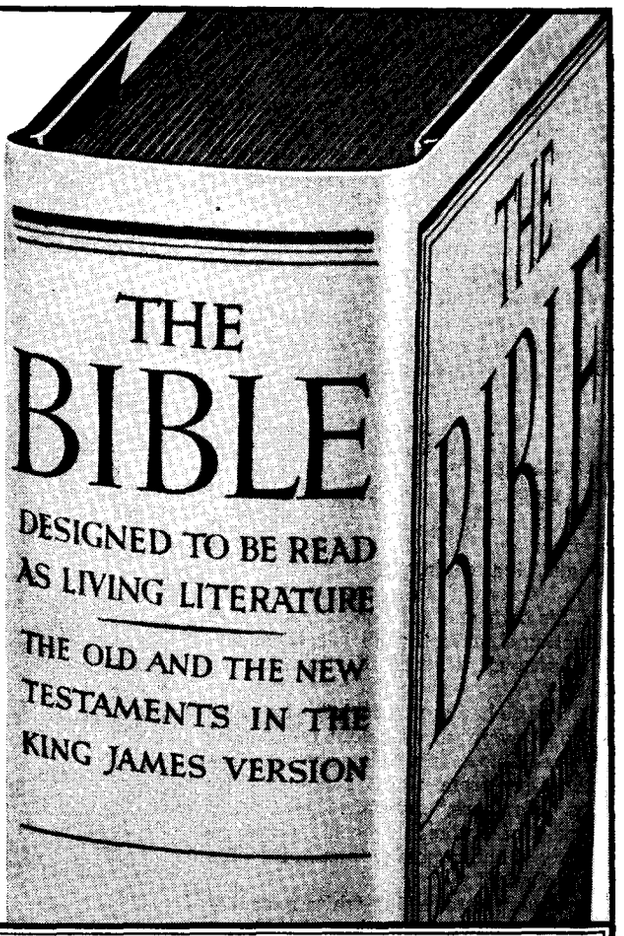

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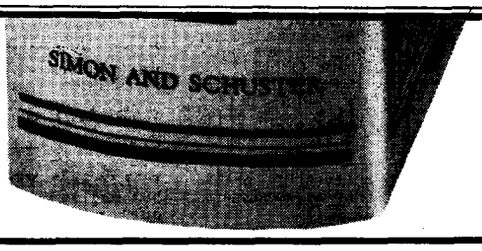

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